



# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Water and COVID-19 FAQs

Information about Drinking Water, Treated Recreational Water, and Wastewater

Updated April 23, 2020

### Summary of Changes

- Updated guidance based on recent research findings for the following questions:
  - Is the virus that causes COVID-19 found in feces (stool)?
  - Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread through sewerage systems?
  - Should wastewater workers take extra precautions to protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19?

### Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread through drinking water? –

The virus that causes COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water. Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those in most municipal drinking water systems, should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.

### Is the virus that causes COVID-19 found in feces (stool)? –

The virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19. However, it is unclear whether the virus found in feces may be capable of causing COVID-19. There has not been any confirmed report of the virus spreading from feces to a person. Scientists also do not know how much risk there is that the virus could be spread from the feces of an infected person to another person. However, they think this risk is low based on data from previous outbreaks of diseases caused by related coronaviruses, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

## Can the virus that causes COVID-19 spread through pools, hot tubs, spas, and water play areas? –

There is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas. Proper operation and maintenance (including disinfection with chlorine and bromine) of these facilities should inactivate the virus in the water.

While there is [ongoing community spread](#) of COVID-19 of the virus that causes COVID-19, it is important for individuals as well as owners and operators of these facilities to take steps to ensure health and safety:

- Everyone should follow local and state guidance that may determine when and how recreational water facilities may operate.
- Individuals should continue to [protect themselves and others](#) at recreational water venues both in and out of the water – for example, by practicing social distancing and good hand hygiene.
- In addition to ensuring water safety and quality, owners and operators of community pools, hot tubs, spas, and water play areas should follow the [interim guidance for businesses and employers](#) for cleaning and disinfecting their community facilities.

## Can the COVID-19 virus spread through sewerage systems? –

The virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in untreated wastewater. Researchers do not know whether this virus can cause disease if a person is exposed to untreated wastewater or sewerage systems. There is no evidence to date that this has occurred. At this time, the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through properly designed and maintained sewerage systems is thought to be low.

Researchers have analyzed the available information which suggest that standard municipal and [individual septic system](#)  wastewater treatment practices should inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC is reviewing information on COVID-19 transmission as it becomes available. Guidance will be updated as new evidence is assessed.

## Should wastewater workers take extra precautions to protect themselves from the virus that causes COVID-19? –

Recently, the virus that causes COVID-19 has been found in untreated wastewater. While data are limited, there is no information to date that anyone has become sick with COVID-19 because of exposure to wastewater.

Standard practices associated with wastewater treatment plant operations should be sufficient to protect wastewater workers from the virus that causes COVID-19. These standard practices can include engineering and administrative controls, hygiene precautions, specific safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) normally required when handling untreated wastewater. No additional COVID-19-specific protections are recommended for workers involved in wastewater management, including those at wastewater treatment facilities.

## If my utility has issued a Boil Water Advisory, can I still use tap water to wash my hands? –

In most cases, it is safe to [wash your hands](#) with soap and tap water during a [Boil Water Advisory](#). Follow the guidance from your local public health officials. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

## For additional information:

[CDC: Guidance for reducing health risks to workers handling human waste or sewage](#)

[CDC: Healthcare professionals: Frequently asked questions and answers](#)

[CDC: Healthy Water](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration: COVID-19 Control and Prevention: Solid waste and wastewater management workers and employers](#) 

[World Health Organization: Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19](#) 

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